

OF BRITISH GUIANA

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515 The hands are usually washed previous to eating, and it is a frequent practice to go to the creek for a bath immediately after a meal.

264 Upon arising in the morning a calabash of sweet (unfermented) cassiri is frequently taken as a pick-me-up, following which a search is made of the pot for breakfast. During the day those individuals who are about the house raid the pot at will. In the evening, when the men have returned from the bush and the women from the field, food is usually taken by all at the same time.

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291 SARTORIALLY the Caribs of the Barama still present a primitive
177 appearance. Trade cloth, it is true, has been making its way up
439 the river in limited quantities for at least a hundred years, as the
testimony of Schomburgk informs us. Its dearness and the intermittent character of the sources of supply have greatly restricted its use. But throughout the entire Barama area in 1932-33, trade cloth was in use for making the loin cloths of both sexes.

[286] The old method of weaving "laps" from cotton and bark fibre has apparently been completely forgotten. In the settlements along the lower part of the river, where contact with trading posts and prospectors is relatively frequent, practically all of the women have dresses of some sort made from imported cloth, and in these lower communities many of the men possess singlet undershirts, short khaki trousers, and old felt hats, articles which comprise an important part of the stock of a trading post or of the "trade goods" of any expedition coming into the area. Trading posts or bush shops serving the Indians and the Negro gold diggers are maintained at Kokerite, Massawini, and Towakaima. (See map, Fig. 1.) They are forlorn little thatched shacks; the Kokerite and Massawini shops are owned by creole Portuguese, the Towakaima shop is owned by a Chinese. The Kokerite shop is in charge of an East Indian, the Massawini shop is under the direction of a Portuguese, the Towakaima shop (owned by Chee-a-Fat, a Chinese man of business whose base of operations is at Arakaka on the Barima) is operated by a Negro. Their stock, without exception, is small and confined to staples and trade goods, but they represent the only outposts of European civilization in the area.

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291 and rear by a belt or girdle which is worn around the waist. The girdle (akondenano, anyone's girdle; akondu, girdle) is made of two cotton cords, each of which is made of four strands braided together. The two braided cords are joined together to a tie-string at either end, the two tie-strings being knotted together when the girdle is worn. A man usually wears two or more akondus. Like a belt, they rest at the sides of the body upon the eminences overlying the illiac crests, sagging downward front and rear so that the navel and the upper lumbar region are exposed. A longer piece of the loin cloth is allowed to hang in front than in back; the front piece is eighteen inches to two feet in length, the back pendant piece only a foot. When engaged in active work, a man usually tucks up the front end of the loin cloth into his girdle.

[531] Women also wear a loin cloth (wori kamisharu tupuru), which when possible is made of blue cloth. It is usually undecorated, bearing no fringe or appliqué. More rarely fringe and appliqué decorate the front end of the female loin cloth. The woman's loin cloth is shorter and slightly wider than the man's. Like the man's, it is initially passed between the legs and suspended from a girdle. In front, however, only a short wide piece hangs free, like a small apron, while the superfluous material at the rear, instead of being allowed to hang as a pendant end after being passed over the girdle, is brought back between the legs and tucked into the girdle in front, under the pendant apron-like strip which hangs down over the pelvic region. Thus the man's costume provides only a single covering of the pelvic organs, while the arrangement of the woman's loin cloth provides double protection in this region.

301 The woman's girdle (wori akondu-kasuru, woman-girdle-beads)
291 is composed of several strings of white china beads attached to
439 tie strings at either end, as in the case of the braided cords of the
man's girdle. The number of strings of beads varies with the
ability of the owner to procure them through trade channels.
Good bead girdles are rare at the present time because, for some
unknown reason, china beads are difficult to obtain in Georgetown
and are consequently seldom imported into the bush by traders.
In case a woman has no beads, she contents herself with a girdle of
unbraided cotton cords. The loin cloth, as I have said, constitutes
the only article of clothing for women in regions where trade goods
are scarce. But because the women, wherever cloth, needles,

301 and thread are available, are assiduous if not highly accomplished
291 seamstresses, certain other items which are occasionally included
439 in the female wardrobe deserve mention.

291 The loin cloths of both sexes, and the girdles, are made by the
294 women. In addition they make the saiya and dresses. The saiya
177 looks like a sort of skirt gathered into a band around the top.
Instead of being worn around the waist, the saiya is suspended over
one shoulder around the neck, leaving the other shoulder bare.
Dresses of several imported patterns are constructed by the
women, most of them having knee-length skirts and being rather
clumsily fitted. One which enjoys a wide popularity on the lower
Barama employs the "trap-door" feature familiar to American
connoisseurs of underwear for nursing mothers of a generation ago.
Dress patterns and knowledge of needle work have been introduced
to the Carib women from at least two sources. The missionaries,
here as elsewhere unconsciously working hand in hand with the
traders, considered it part of the Christian religion to encase the
bodies of the women in garments which would adequately protect
them from the gaze of men, and provided cloth and instruction
to the women for this purpose. Secondly, during the 'heyday' of
the lumber business, when the sawmill at the mouth of the river
was flourishing, the proprietors of that establishment were re-
quired to tax their ingenuity to the utmost in importing con-
stantly new types of trade goods with which to rouse the avidity
of the Carib woodcutters and their wives. A Carib takes the sen-
sible attitude that there is little point in working for someone else,
once he has earned all that he desires. And since the simple
desires of the Caribs could be satisfied with the proceeds of a few
days' labor, it was necessary for the harassed sawmill operators,
who were dependent upon Carib labor in their woodcutting opera-
tions, to stimulate new desires in the hearts of their employees.
One of the results of this situation was the importation of cheap
ready-made silk and cotton dresses, which immediately caught the
eye of the women. Unhappily, the husbands were required, at the
prevailing level of prices in the bush, to work long and earnestly
to procure the garments, but the women got the dresses in the
end. In the course of time the necessary patching and repairing
on these gowns led the women to a familiarity with their construc-
tion, so that the more skillful seamstresses learned how to dupli-

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number and the largest variety of items. Also, Miller or the mem- 422
bers of his household own some of the most valuable-imported 556
items obtained in trade. This condition does to a certain extent
reflect Miller's social prominence in the settlement; it may be re-
garded as a result of his social position, but not as a cause. Those 554
outsiders who have dealings with the settlement (such as traders 622
at Towakaima, the prospector Bell, myself) deal with Miller as 464
the recognized head of the settlement, as the man with greatest 439
influence; and he is therefore enabled to acquire more trade goods
than other men. For instance, I required a crew of four men to go
down river to Aranka, where I had left my supplies, and return to
Sawari carrying a portion of the supplies on their backs. The
round-trip journey was a matter of perhaps one hundred miles or
about ten days. It was an arduous job, but one for which each of
the men would be well paid. Negotiations were started with
several men individually, but their enthusiasm was only mildly
aroused, even by the prospect of acquiring fine trade goods for
themselves and their families. Finally the matter was broached
to Miller, who promptly persuaded four young men to undertake
the journey as a favor to themselves, to him, and to me. A deal
was made between Miller and the men whereby Miller obtained a
certain part of the trade goods which each man received as pay,
in return for his services in arranging the employment for them.
Thus Miller, without making the trip himself, received more
goods than any one of the men. But there is no formalization in
an arrangement of this kind, which was made, in this case, simply
as a personal agreement between Miller and the other men. His
social prestige lent a persuasiveness to his words, but, although
the consummation of a successful deal of this kind doubtless added
something in turn to Miller's personal prestige, there is nothing in
his office of headman which enables him to coerce the other mem-
bers of the settlement. This was illustrated later, when the negro
prospector, Bell, requested several laborers of Miller. Although
Miller again tried to persuade members of the settlement to take
the work, he was in this instance unsuccessful because the men
involved considered Bell's trade goods too poor to make the job
worth their while.

A mere survey of material possessions among the Caribs indi- 556
cates a small degree of social importance because in this culture 422
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2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

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175 most of these men were located on the Lower Barama below Towakaima.
*177 Also, by this time gold production had fallen off. Only 18,094
ounces are reported for the period 1912 to 1935 (Bishop 1941:20).

Although the numbers of gold seekers that came to the Upper
Barama cannot be known, the changes they promoted are apparent.
Over time, the reappearance of these prospectors led to the estab-
lishment of interdependencies between gold seekers and Amerindians.

175 In their effort to accommodate themselves to bush living, porknockers
*177 bought or traded for provisions and labor, and fathered children with
• 439 Amerindian women. In addition to these rather dispersed, situational
relationships with local Amerindians, porknockers also interacted
with middlemen who established shops in the area. The porkknocking
activities provided a potential market into which the middlemen moved
to buy gold and sell provisions.

Accordingly, transportation was extended to link the Upper Barama
area to other outposts in the North West District as well as to
Georgetown. Gillin reports (1936:107) that for about a year around
1910, the firm of Farnum and Smyth had a shop on the Anamu, a tribu-
tary of the Upper Barama. This shop was supplied by a tent boat
hauled over the Great Falls by rollers, rope, and tackle. Also, by
1930, Chee-a-fat, a Chinese businessman, had established a shop below
the falls at Towakaima. Seroston's launch made trips to Towakaima
to serve this shop. Sometime before 1937, I. G. Ribeiro opened a
shop on the opposite bank (Bishop 1941:4). Ribeiro owned his own
boats to connect this shop to his other shops lower on the Barama.
Similarly, Chee-a-fat's shop was an outpost of his central location
at Aranka on the Lower Barama.

000 at Aranka on the Lower Barama.

*177 All during this early period of gold activities, the river system
175 predominated as the route of transportation and communication. To
[487] move down the river was to go toward greater penetration of outside

influences. Conversely, the Great Falls at Towakaina remained the
133 gateway to the Upper Barama. However, the Upper Barama is often
487 unnavigable. The water height fluctuates greatly with seasonal
rainfall. The low water level exposes numerous fallen trees and

*177 impedes or prohibits river travel. Thus, the bush trails that follow
175 along the river course were as important for transportation as the
487 river itself.

There also existed bush trails which ran overland between the
Barama River and the Cuyuni River to the south, and the Barima River

*177 to the north. During the peak of early gold activities, a government
175 trail connected Towakaina, located on the Barama River, and Arakaka,
653 located on the Barima River. This trail was about twenty-nine miles
487 long, graveled and ditched for use by mule and cart traffic. However,
by 1932, this trail had fallen out of use (Gillin 1936:107).

*177 Clearly, the river system was the lodestar of direction used by
175 the early gold seekers. Also, with river travel and bush trails,
[487] internal communication and transportation links within this region of
the North West District were more developed than links to Georgetown.
Later, air travel eclipsed the river as the main artery of communi-
cation and transportation. The most immediate links outside the
Upper Barama area became those to Georgetown via Timehri Airport.

• [439] The nature of the material exchanges which flowed along regional
networks also changed.

175 damaged. Twice the shaft was repaired. However, after considerable
*177 financial losses over a period of fifteen months, the third inundation
of the shaft forced Baird to close the operations late in 1969.
Government attempts were made to sustain In Time mine. These did not
succeed. Government influence in the Upper Barama River area was
rechanneled through a structural reorganization which will be
discussed later.

In any event, both of these companies had a long term local
[44] impact. Although incorporating negligible bush materials and
Amerindian labor, the brief existence of the Axel Johnson Company
• [439] increased the accessibility of the area. Wesley A. Baird's activ-
ities contributed significantly to local participation in material
exchanges along regional communication and transportation networks.

*177 The building of the air pool already has been mentioned. Previous
175 to its existence, cargo was shipped either up the Barima River or up
653 the Barama River during short periods of high water. Men then carried
the supplies overland to the mining camps. The Axel Johnson Company
initiated a survey for an air strip. However, this project ceased
when Old World was closed. Impressed by Baird's continuing gold
activities, the Government carried on the surveying and finally
located high ground for an air strip. In 1953, the Baramita Air
Strip was constructed. The air pool served to bring in equipment
which was assembled in the bush. At the same time, Wapishana
Amerindians were brought in to serve as laborers. The completed air
*177 strip of approximately 300 feet cost about \$80,000. For easy access
175 between the air strip and In Time, Baird undertook the building of a

2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
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175 five mile road for tractor and trailer. This was completed at the
estimated cost of \$2 a foot in the early 1960's.

As with the air pool, the use of the air strip depended on contracting charter flights. The relatively high cost of passage, plus limited access to this travel through the radio phone and contacts in Georgetown, tended to make air travel an exclusive means of transportation. Only those few individuals who were economically involved in the gold market could use it. For them, the 170 miles to Georgetown were only an hour's distance.

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439 Attending his mining enterprise, Baird became the broker controlling access to gold and manpower in the Upper Barama River area. He incorporated bush materials and Amerindian labor rather than maintaining a totally supplied enclave. As will be detailed in a subsequent chapter, this greatly influenced local Amerindian cultural adaptations. By relying on bush resources as well as regional markets, Baird was able to withstand for a time the rising cost of production in the face of the constant price of gold. However, his balance between the generalized porkknocking and the specialization of industrial gold mining eventually was tipped. As his operations became more immersed in a money economy and his equipment of the nature that had to be regularly sustained by fuel and manufactured parts for repairs, he could not fall back on bush resources. Local bush materials and Amerindian labor could not sustain him during periods of isolation from regional markets. Thus, after thirty-five years in the Upper Barama River area, Baird's gold mining activities were specialized to the extent that they no longer could be maintained

*177 independent of regular contact with regional transportation and
175 communication.

• 439 Nevertheless, the relationships Baird established during this
period are critical to our analysis. Over the years, he clearly
became the middleman through whom a local economy interfingered with
175 the regional economy. He supplied limited employment opportunities
*177 and market outlets. Thus, a number of Amerindians left aside sub-
464 sistence farming and depended on the wage work he provided. Others
sought occasional employment, and still others supplied provisions
for those engaged in mining activities. All of this had an important
impact on the Amerindian population.

*177 In effect, Baird became a patron of Amerindian clients. As such,
175 he was subsequently the person through whom government services were
466 introduced and government support was elicited. During the later
659 years of Baird's gold mining activities, government health care was
first introduced. The support elicited was a call for Amerindian
votes. Eventually, when Baird gave up mining, he assumed an official
role as government employee. His position as the broker controlling
access to the Amerindians in the Upper Barama was clearly underscored
by the missionary attempt to establish a similar relationship.

Missionaries

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*177 The Pilgrim Holiness Church Corporation is a fundamentalist
797 organization based in the midwestern United States. They have been
active in Guyana at least since the early 1920's. Their early
activities were on the coast and later expanded into the interior.

162 and 171 children in the age category of four years and under. Of
course, this discounts incidences of mortality as well as the passage
163 in and out of these age categories with time. More specifically,
from July 1970 through June 1971, twenty-five children were born to
the segment of the Carib population at Baramita Air Strip. Expressed
as a crude birth rate, this is eighty-three births per 100 population.
Expressed as a general rate of birth,¹⁴ in this case the ratio of
births to women between ages twenty and forty-four, this is 490.3
161 births per 1000 women. At this rate of growth, coupled with the
current negligible rate of mortality, this population will double in
size about every ten years or until limiting factors intervene.

163 The reproductive histories of the women at Baramita Air Strip
*177 allow a closer focus on this new reproductive pattern. Among this
segment of the population, sixty-three women have borne children.¹⁵
The reproductive histories of fifty-nine of these women were collected
and are presented in Table 10. The age categories selected are under
twenty-five, twenty-five to thirty-nine, forty to fifty-four, and
fifty-five and over. Organized in this manner, it is clear that the
reproductive careers that occurred after 1940 are quite different
from reproductive careers that did not. The women in the younger age
category, forty to fifty-four, show clear evidence of the new repro-
ductive pattern of twenty to thirty month intervals between births.
The oldest woman in this group is estimated to be fifty-one.

[464] Accordingly, all of these women began reproducing after the avail-
[439] ability of employment and market opportunities with the mining
companies.

IV

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES: REGIONAL NETWORKS OF EXCHANGE

*177 Over time, the subsistence economy of the Upper Barama River
438 Caribs has been supplemented by various regional markets. As a
• 439 consequence, the common material exchanges that serve the Upper
Barama River Caribs as a population have changed. An increasing
[182] extralocal involvement in regional networks of exchange has been
added to a local adaptation to the rain forest, and new resources
have been made available to this population.

175 During Gillin's study in 1932-33, subsistence resources were
182 derived primarily from the natural environment. The similar nature
of the local adaptations of the Carib settlements dispersed along the
Upper Barama River corridor has been discussed. There was no apparent
[628] basis for specialization and trade among settlements. Within each
[938] settlement, material property was individually owned. A man owned his
175 clothing, field, house, hunting and fishing equipment, canoe, tools,
421 and the game he caught (Gillin 1934:335). A woman owned her clothing,
implements for working in the field and house, including pottery and
basketry (although basketry was exclusively made by the men in their
household). All tools were usually manufactured by the individual
owning them or someone in their household. Within settlements, food
[621] was distributed, tools were shared, and assistance rendered in the
activities of making a living in the bush.

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• 439 Throughout the time period under consideration, commercial trade goods have been incorporated, mostly by way of substitution for their local equivalent. Axehheads, cutlasses, knives, iron griddle pans, [412] cotton cloth, and shotguns reached the population in varying degrees [415] at the time of Gillin's study (1934:332). These trade goods did not [175] lose their popularity. They have been added to by other external resources and their quantity and availability have been increased.

[163] Eventually, a flow of external goods and services into the Upper [161] Barama River area has resulted in an increased birth rate and an [511] increasing population size, an improved standard of living, and [621] changes in the social organization of the population.

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[484] However, markets have been introduced and controlled by external agents. As has already been explained, the Upper Barama River Caribs do not have easy access to regional markets. They do not travel to transact regional exchanges. Rather, they have depended on the opportunities provided by non-Carib middlemen who reside in the Upper Barama River area and who have good access to the limited transportation and communication facilities. As characteristic of the conveyance of regional exchanges into remote areas, market opportunities have been highly personalized. This was characteristic of the early period of porkknocking activities and the existence of the gold [657] companies. Personalized market networks continue to be associated with government programs and services at Baramita Air Strip.

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439 Market Opportunities Provided by the Early Gold Seekers
The earliest regional exchanges reported for these Caribs involved

*177 food. Such exchanges were realized with the early prospectors.
175 Provisions, especially cassava and meat, would be traded for salt,
437 tools, tobacco, glass beads, and also money. Occasionally, parrots,
• 439 monkeys, varacabras, and other pets were traded to these porknockers.

[609] Exchanges would occur more or less by chance. A porknocker might wander into a settlement and wait until the bashful residents had recovered themselves sufficiently to come out of hiding and deal with him. There was little bargaining. Rather, each party approached the

*177 exchange as a nonrecurring opportunity. When prospecting became
175 more familiar among the Caribs, private ownership was recognized in
423 gold creeks (Gillin 1934:335). The individual who discovered a

[432] specific creek was considered to be the owner. He could sell it, usually to a porknocker who came.

*177 Eventually, Carib men exchanged short term periods of labor for
175 trade goods. Often this work was done for a specific object. Guns
437 which could be purchased over the counter in Georgetown were espe-
461 cially desired. An Amerindian would often be asked to cut down a
439 large field and build a house for such a payment. However, as Gillin reports (1936:131), Caribs were not always so easily induced to work. The men of Savari refused employment by a prospector as they felt his trade goods were too meager. The Carib men had to desire the goods to be traded and also be assured of actually being paid and not exploited. It was some time before individual proknockers with their recurrent trips to the Upper Barama River area were able to count on help from specific Caribs. Even longer periods of trust were necessary before these Caribs agreed to work in return for specific trade goods

*197 the porkknocker would bring on his next trip from Georgetown.
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464 However, relations with porknockers remained as transient as the
439 porkknocking operations themselves.

In short, these early opportunities were of a windfall nature.

*197 Neither porkknocker nor Carib was economically bound to the other.
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437 Thus, these were associational relationships. With the establishment
439 of trust, both the porkknocker and Carib cooperated for mutual benefit.

If a porkknocker abused an Amerindian, he and often others would no longer work for this person. The reputations of Amerindians were also important. These early, individualized exchanges served to bring in trade goods which were incorporated into the existing subsistence

(511) pattern of the population. However, it was not until the presence of the mining companies that market opportunities were localized and of a sufficiently permanent nature to affect the local Carib subsistence routine.

Markets Introduced by the Gold Companies

*197 Population data suggest that there are significant changes in the
195 nature of reproduction among the Carib population in the time periods
163 before and after 1940, when mining companies were first established
511 in the Upper Barama River area. A more precise investigation of the relationship of the local population to new market opportunities introduced by the gold mining companies is in order. It is not assumed that there is a definable equation between the quantity of trade goods reaching this population and an increased rate of birth. The process of adaptation to these new markets does not appear to be

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The trade store was the main vehicle for the involvement of the remainder of the population in regional exchange. With the establishment of Baird's enterprise, there was a constant call for local foods which the trade store stocked. Caribs not employed at the mine were then able to sell these foods on a more or less planned basis. The residents of Aranka, Baramita, and later the Air Strip, did this regularly. Caribs in the more remote settlements made more infrequent trips. However, the quantities required were limited. No special fields were cut nor special crops planted. Part of the regular subsistence production was used for these exchange purposes. Also, there operated informal consignment agreements. When a supply of meat, cassava, plantains, yams, or whatever ran low, individual men were invited to bring these to the store. Often no money changed

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hands. Rather, small accounts were kept. In addition to exchanges centralized by the trade store, some exchanges occurred directly

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between Caribs. The prices used were those at the trade store. Also, for a short time, the missionaries contributed to the market opportunities in the area by occasionally hiring a few laborers, by buying some local handicraft items, and by selling food and clothing.

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Before the mine closed in 1969, one other development occurred which further involved this population in regional exchange networks.

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A local administrative structure, devised and implemented by the Ministry of Local Government, has been imposed on Amerindian populations to promote national political integration.³ Amerindian

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offices were first introduced among the Upper Barana River Caribs with an election held at In Time in October 1967. From among four

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464 Periodically, they made field trips to the more remote settlements, including those in the headwaters of the Barima River. Also, more extensive employment was available with the Malaria Eradication Officer. He visits the area about every six months and employs about ten men for periods up to six weeks. The pay for carrying loads for [465] the Agricultural Field Assistant was about \$4 a day. Those men employed by the officers of the Ministry of Health received about \$6 a day.

In short, jobs were temporary and limited, similar to the early employment with transient porkknockers. In contrast to the casual participation in the early opportunities, the limited jobs available at Baramita Air Strip constituted an unemployment problem. The Upper Barama River Caribs before and after thirty years of mining activities were operating on a very different economic basis. The commercial goods and a steady source of provisions provided by employment had come to be a desirable alternative to maintaining a farm in the bush. Nevertheless, due to the impermanence of employment, a Carib who becomes separated from a subsistence relationship to the rain forest is in a precarious position, as witnessed by the subsistence crisis experienced by the former miners and their families when In Time mine was closed. The remaining regional markets available at Baramita Air Strip were specifically intended to augment an agrarian subsistence among the Upper Barama River Caribs.

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657 A large number of men were involved in subsidized agricultural development. In the summer of 1970, the first field was cut. About 241 four acres of black-eyed peas were planted. From the harvest, 350 439 664

2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

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*177 pounds were received by the Guyana Marketing Corporation in George-
657 town. From the sale of this harvest, \$90 was returned to Baramita
241 Air Strip and distributed among the ten or twelve men who had worked
439 on the project. By the fall of 1970, a larger project subsidized by
654 the Government was under way. From among the previous miners, ten
were paid \$4 a day to cut fields, plant, and later harvest crops. One
man became discouraged before the harvest, and his field was turned
over to another. One large field was cut alongside the air strip.
Eight men were each apportioned a strip about seventy-five feet by
500 to 550 feet. Two other miners developed a separate field of about
five acres which they worked together. The seeds were given by the
Government and had to be returned from the harvest. The sale of the
remainder of the crop to the Guyana Marketing Corporation was the
farmer's profit. Peanuts and red beans were planted, and families
were encouraged to help the men in the fields.

In addition to these specific projects, other Carib men were
encouraged to grow cash crops with the government loan of seeds. At
first, two men participated. They each planted peanuts. The combined
March and April 1971 harvest from all of this subsidized farming
amounted to 1416 pounds of peanuts, which sold for \$481.44, and 374

*177 pounds of red beans, which sold for \$88.75. Also, in April and again
657 in May of 1971, rations for cooperative farm projects were introduced
262 at Baramita Air Strip. These rations included wheat flour, vegetable
oil, and a mixture of cornmeal, soy bean flour, and powdered milk
called bulgar wheat. This food⁵ was distributed among about twenty-
five men from the Air Strip as well as the satellite settlements
where others were cutting fields for cash crops.

2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

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000 where others were cutting fields for cash crops.

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• 439 From time to time, the Agricultural Field Assistant arranged for bunches of bananas and plantains to be sent to the Guyana Marketing Corporation in Georgetown. Two Carib farmers were involved in this enterprise. From November through December, 1970, 607 pounds of bananas, 353 pounds of plantains, and thirty-five pounds of apple bananas were received by the Guyana Marketing Corporation from Baramita Air Strip. This returned a payment of \$58.83.⁶ Later, another man was encouraged to bring out a crop of limes from Baramita settlement for shipment to Guyana Marketing Corporation.

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439 Still another new market opportunity involves handicrafts. Under the encouragement of the Welfare Officer for Amerindian Handicraft and Artifacts, the Project Officer looked into the local possibilities. He developed the manufacture of decorative bow and arrow sets. Smaller versions of the bows and arrows in use were designed. Both bows and arrows were about three feet long. One bow and two arrows were mounted on small wooden stands. Craftsmanship was put at a premium, and only the fancier washiba and leopard woods were used. A variety of arrow points for spearing fish and hunting game animals and birds no longer generally in use were revived. Men were paid between \$3.00 and \$5.00 per set, depending on the quality and the market in Georgetown. Having gathered all the materials, it generally took a man from two to three days of steady work to complete a set. Mostly only residents at the Air Strip made them, and any set that did not meet the Project Officer's standards was not accepted. At the end of the first year, several hundred of these sets had been

*177 sent to Georgetown. A few times when the Welfare Officer for Amer-
657 Indian Handicraft and Artifacts had a definite buyer, she made a
322 special request for the large functional bows and arrows. However,
439 this opportunity affected only one man who made these especially well.

*177 At other times, a few pots, matapis, the cylindrical basket used to
657 squeeze prussic acid out of manioc, and sifters, used to grate the
439 cylinder of dried manioc pulp, and other basketry work were sent to
285 Georgetown.
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*177 Another episode involving regional markets concerns tropical fish.
657 For a few weeks from the end of April and into May 1971, Aenus Catfish,
226 both speckled and plain, were collected. These fish are about an inch
439 and a half long and can be easily caught by hand or net in the stream
beds during the dry seasons. In early April, letter correspondence
developed between the Project Officer and the proprietor of an aquarium
supply company in Georgetown. The Project Officer was offered \$50
per thousand of these fish, and he appointed a man with the help of
his adult son to initiate collecting catfish. The first Friday,
650 catfish were sent to Georgetown in open tins via Guyana Airways.
The men were paid 3c per fish, and the rest of the income was used in
the care and storing of these fish. The proprietor paid the air
freight costs. More generally men were encouraged to collect catfish,
and residents from the satellite settlements as well as the Air Strip
were involved. Usually on Friday morning, men would bring their catch
to the air strip well before the plane came. Each man would bring as
few as twenty-five fish which brought 75c. The Project Officer would
supervise the counting of fish and the loading of filled tins onto

*177 the small aircraft. As is common in the handling and transportation
657 of tropical fish, many would die. Up to as many as ten percent of
226 the fish would be lost in transit to Georgetown, and the proprietor
• 439 cut the price to 4 1/2c per live fish he received. After a few
thousand catfish had been sent to Georgetown, tropical fish operations
were suspended.

*177 With this proliferation of small market opportunities, a money
438 economy continued to develop in the Upper Barama River area after the
436 closing of the mine. A government trade store is now located at
*177 Baramita Air Strip and operated by the Project Officer. During
657 1970-71, the minimal stock of tinned sardines, salt fish, flour, rice,
443 sugar, cigarettes, matches, ammunition, cutlasses and knives, cloth
438 lengths, pants and shirts, school exercise books and pencils was
439 sometimes depleted by delay in the shipment of supplies from George-

*177 town. More often, Caribs did not have the cash to make purchases.
436 Money tended to be a more specialized means of exchange. Only it could
[182] be used to purchase commercial goods. As a consequence of the limited
circulation of money among this population, there occurred a renewed

*177 reliance on bush resources for food and tools. Secondary networks
438 for the exchange of local provision foods greatly disappeared. A
[464] marked separation of those employed and unemployed during the mining
economy was lost. In contrast, a diversity of limited opportunities
*177 to directly participate in regional exchanges was available more
438 generally to the population at Baramita Air Strip. In this manner,
439 the regional economy among the Upper Barama River Caribs has been
[657] supported by the national government since the closing of the mine.

2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

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439 Since Gillin's time, miners, missionaries, and government projects have all combined to provide this population with market opportunities. Wages and external resources have come to be central in the problem of making a living in the bush. However, Caribs exercise little or no control of the market opportunities, nor do they have the means to travel to reach other markets. To this extent, the Upper Barama River Caribs have remained detached from managerial or entrepreneurial roles in their participation in regional exchanges. The conveyance of market opportunities into the Upper Barama River area has remained highly dependent on non-Carib middlemen. There are no intervening regional market networks with adjacent populations. Rather, exchange is directly with individuals who have come into the frontier from a center of commercial and governmental activity, Georgetown, and bring with them transportation and communication ties back to this center. With the considerable flux of individual middlemen and the market opportunities they have brought into the area, specific sources of regional trade have been marked by their impermanence. Thus, the Upper Barama River Caribs have increasingly become a population encapsulated within and dependent upon the national society.

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43 The relationships Caribs have had with middlemen reflect the highly fluid nature of regional exchanges. In the face of the obviously uncertain markets conveyed by the porkknockers, Caribs remained uncommitted to these resource opportunities. In contrast, the men from the mining companies stood in a position of increased resource demand and control of the regional transportation and communication networks.

[571] The more established nature of mining company enterprises prompted